

Saint Louis Zoo WildCare Institute Update

April 2012

Created in 2004 to bring together conservation initiatives under a single organization, the Saint Louis Zoo WildCare Institute is dedicated to creating a sustainable future for wildlife and for people around the world. The Institute and its 12 centers take a holistic approach to troubled ecosystems by addressing three key ingredients in conservation success: wildlife management and recovery, conservation science, and support of the human populations that coexist with wildlife. Thank you for your interest in the WildCare Institute and the Saint Louis Zoo.

Here's the latest news on the Saint Louis Zoo WildCare Institute Center activities.

Center for Sahelo-Saharan Wildlife Recovery The Zoo is pleased to announce that in partnership with Sahara Conservation Fund, the Republic of Niger, the Convention on Migratory Species, and numerous zoos and other conservation organizations around the world, we have realized our shared dream to establish a nature reserve for addax and other Sahelo-Saharan wildlife in the Termit/Tin Toumma region of Niger. On March 6, the Council of Ministers for the Republic of Niger decreed the formal establishment of the Termit & Tin Toumma National Nature and Cultural Reserve. At 97,000 km² (37,450 square miles), the reserve is bigger than the state of Indiana, and now ranks as the largest protected area in Africa. The Zoo's Sahelo-Saharan Center has been working with Sahara Conservation Fund since 2004 to support the ongoing wildlife and habitat monitoring that has been used to help inform decision-making on the boundaries and management strategy for this unique Saharan area.

Center for Conservation of the American Burying Beetle April 23, the Zoo received final approval from U.S. Fish & Wildlife for reintroduction of the American burying beetle in southwestern Missouri. The reintroduction site in St. Clair and Cedar counties is jointly owned and managed by the Missouri Department of Conservation and the Nature Conservancy. For the June reintroduction in Missouri, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, which owns the 7,000 captive beetles the Zoo has bred since 2005, approved a special designation for the beetles. This designation helps provide assurance to nearby private landowners that the presence of this protected species will not affect farming and other activities. "The beetle was last seen in Missouri in the mid-1970s, and for the last decade, the Zoo has been monitoring for existing American burying beetles—with none found," said Saint Louis Zoo Zoological Manager for Invertebrates Bob Merz, who is director of the American Burying Beetle Center. "Our contribution to reintroduction efforts by returning the beetle to parts of its former range is the beginning of the recovery of this beautiful beetle." The beetles' historic range included 35 states and three Canadian provinces, but at the time of its listing as endangered in 1989, only two beetle populations were known—one in Rhode Island, and one in Oklahoma. Later, populations were found in Arkansas, Nebraska, Texas, South Dakota and Kansas—but not in Missouri. Here's link to a local article that well describes the reintroduction plan: http://ozarksfirst.com/fulltext?nxd_id=620852 and a link to an article by Bob Merz in the St. Louis University Alumni magazine: <http://www.slu.edu/x59011.xml>

Center for Native Pollinator Conservation The Zoo website now has a range of resources to encourage gardeners and others to help bees and other pollinator insects flourish. There are tips on planting pollinator gardens with lists of the right flowers to plant to provide habitat for bees and other pollinators. The Zoo recently installed several nesting blocks for bees; the Zoo's website also has tips on building nesting boxes for several species of twig and tunnel nesting bees, like leafcutter, mason, and masked bees.

Visit <http://www.stlzoo.org/conservation/wildcare-institute/center-for-native-pollinator-conservation/> In addition, center director and Curator for Invertebrates Ed Spevak presented several lectures on native pollinators and the Center for Native Pollinator Conservation, speaking to students of Webster University, docents at the Zoo and the Gateway Greening Community Garden Summit.